

THE MEMORIALS OF
THE FIRST PARISH CHURCH OF
EAST DERRY

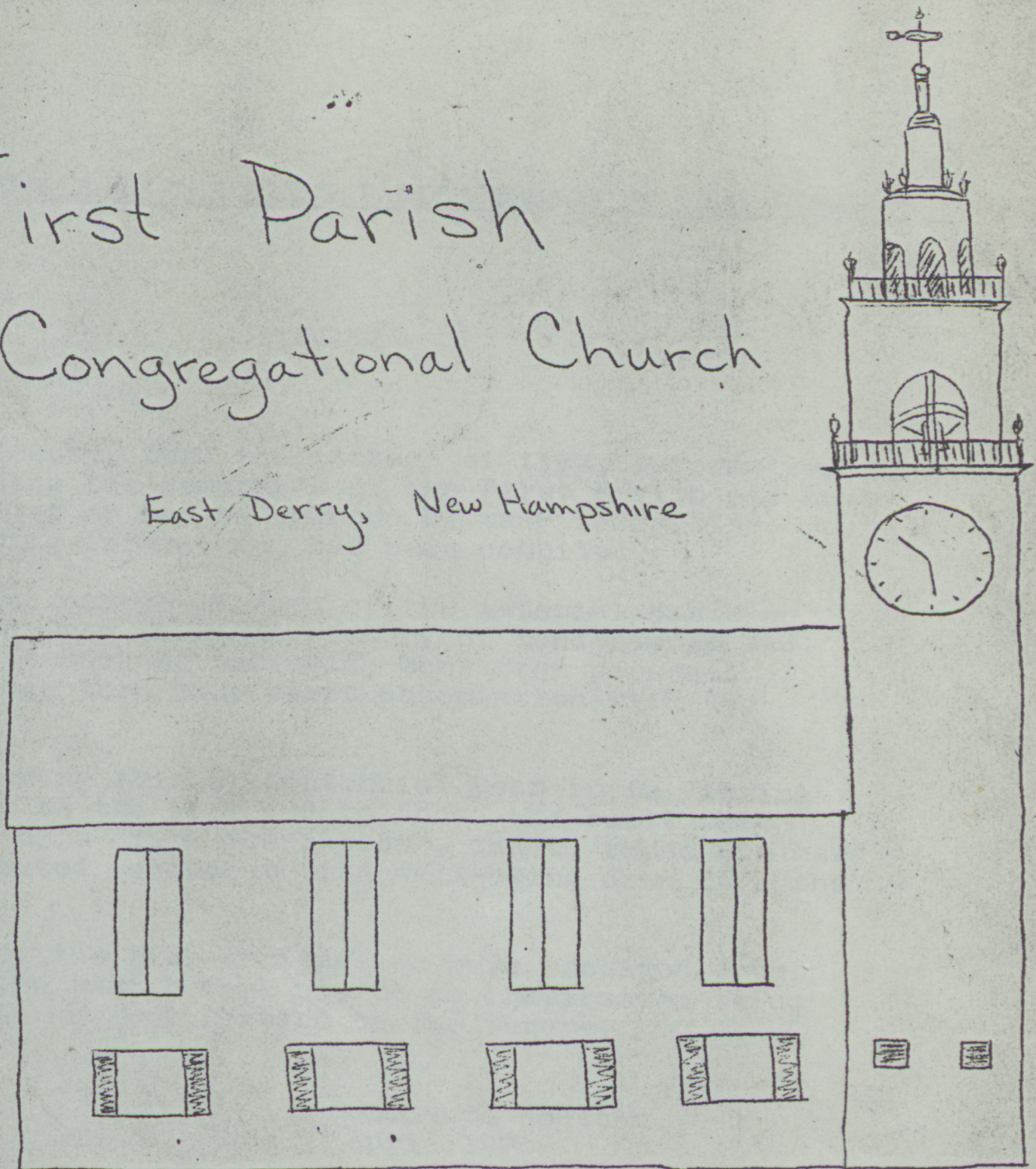
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First Parish Congregational Church

East Derry, New Hampshire



The Memorials in the Church
and those whom they remember

—Compiled by Donald C. Houston

THE MEMORIALS OF THE FIRST PARISH CHURCH OF EAST DERRY

FOREWORD

Because, thru the passage of time, information regarding the memorials of the First Parish may have been lost or may be unknown by many today, the following information has been compiled.

The source of most of the material has been derived from Parker's History of Londonderry and Willey's Book of Nutfield; some from personal knowledge thru many years association with the church.

During this Bi-Centennial year it is fitting we look to the past and to those who built this church on a "firm foundation", and to those who have contributed so much to its well-being down thru the years.

May the rich heritage we have received from those who went before us, be an inspiration to us today as we look forward to the future.

Donald C. Houston
April 1976

THE HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

CHAPTER I

Introduction. This is a history of the United States of America, from the first settlement of the continent to the present time. It is a history of the people, of their struggles, of their triumphs, and of their failures. It is a history of the land, of its resources, of its climate, and of its geography. It is a history of the sea, of its commerce, of its navigation, and of its fisheries. It is a history of the sky, of its stars, of its planets, and of its moons.

The first chapter of this history is devoted to the discovery of the continent. It tells of the voyages of the explorers, of the first settlements, and of the early struggles of the pioneers. It tells of the discovery of gold, of the discovery of oil, and of the discovery of the great West. It tells of the discovery of the great North American continent, and of the discovery of the great South American continent.

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THE HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

THE MEMORIAL WINDOWS

Probably one of the most apparent groups of memorials to the casual observer, are the beautiful stained glass windows of the sanctuary. They were installed prior to, and dedicated on September 10, 1884, at the rededication service following the remodeling of the interior of the church.

The rededication service was led by the Rev. Joshua Wyman Wellman D.D.. A native of New Hampshire, being born in this state, graduating from Kimball Union Academy in Meriden, N.H. and Dartmouth College in Hanover, in 1846. Dr. Wellman taught for about four years in both N.H. and Mass. schools before being graduated from Andover Seminary in 1850. The First Parish Church was Dr. Wellman's first parish after his ordination, being installed pastor on June 18, 1851. He was to continue his pastorate here five years before serving several churches in Mass.

Dr. Wellman was to have an illustrious career in the work of the church, as a corporate member of the American Board of Commissioners of Foreign Missions and a trustee of Phillips Academy and Andover Theological Seminary along with numerous other accomplishments. Rev. Wellman received his Doctorate from Dartmouth in 1870.

Dr. Wellman's sermon, on the occasion of the rededication service in 1884 is in itself a pocket history of the church to that time. Entitled "The Transcendent Value of the Christian Sanctuary", the sermon speaks for itself in its challenge to the future.

The Memorial windows so rich in taste and beauty, to quote Dr. Wellman "are richer still in the names they bear".

THE REV. JAMES MACGREGOR MEMORIAL

This window is dedicated to the Rev. MacGregor, first pastor of the new settlement, and to his wife Marion Cargil. This window was donated to the parish by Mr. James MacGregor Adams of Chicago, Ill.

The Rev. MacGregor was born in Ireland, probably in the year 1677, where he also received his formal education. Ordained there as a minister in the Presbyterian denomination, he accompanied the settlers to the new world as their spiritual leader. He was to serve the new settlement for only ten years until his death in 1729. However these were the crucial years for the new settlement.

Mr. MacGregor was, and I quote from the words of his funeral sermon preached by the Rev. Mr. Philips of Andover, Mass., "a wise, affectionate, and faithful guide to his people, both in civil and religious matters." We are told Mr. MacGregor was "strictly evangelical in his doctrinal views and peculiarly spiritual and experimental in his preaching."

Mr. MacGregor died as he had lived, in the service of the Lord. He was fifty-two at the time of his death, and left a widow and seven children.

Not too much is known of his wife Marion Cargil during her early years. The MacGregors were married in Londonderry, Ireland in October, 1706. Of the MacGregor children, little is known of any except David, who will be mentioned elsewhere in the narrative.

THE REV. DAVID MACGREGOR MEMORIAL

Sharing the same window as his distinguished father is the Rev. David MacGregor. He was also born in Ireland, on November 10, 1710, the third son of the family. We are told that Rev. David did not attend the regular colleges of the time but received most of his formal education from the Rev. Matthew Clark, who supplied the First Parish as its minister following the death of the Rev. James MacGregor. Such were the educational attainments of David that he was awarded an honorary degree of Master of Arts from Princeton.

We are told that David MacGregor declined a call to become pastor of the Presbyterian Church of New York City, preferring rather to minister to his own flock in Londonderry. Mr. MacGregor served the West Parish for forty years as its pastor, holding his last formal service only a few days before his death on May 30, 1777. He was sixty-eight years of age.

Mr. MacGregor was married to the former Mary Boyd, an orphan who had been raised by his mother. They were the parents of nine children, the most famous being Col. Robert MacGregor.

We are told that David MacGregor was eminently evangelistic in his preaching, and helped to bring about several religious revivals during his time. Following Mr. MacGregor's death the West Parish was to remain without a pastor for six years. After having made trial of a number of candidates, a choice was made of Mr. William Morrison. Mr. Morrison was ordained at the West Parish Church Feb. 12, 1783.

At the top of this Memorial Window may be found the MacGregor family coat of arms and the Scotch motto "E'en do bait spair nocht," which means generally, "Act carefully but spare nothing."

GEN. GEORGE REID MEMORIAL

General George Reid was a native son of Londonderry who was to achieve a high degree of fame during the American Revolution. Being involved in the conflict from the very beginning of hostilities, he along with John Stark, marched with their local militia to Cambridge after the action at Lexington and Concord.

George Reid was born in 1733 son of James Reid, an early settler in Londonderry and a selectman of the town in that year. Gen. Reid was married to Mary Woodburn also of Londonderry. The Reid Farm on Kilrea Road in Derry still stands today, the interior still in a relatively unchanged condition from its original state, having the wide floor boards and huge fireplaces. We are told the place was under construction at the time Gen. Reid left for the conflict at Boston.

George Reid was to serve on the staff of Gen. Washington throughout most of the Revolution, participating in many battles with valor, including the battles of Long Island, White Plains, Trenton, Brandywine, Germantown, Saratoga and Stillwater. He also shared the hardship of the terrible winter at Valley Forge in 1777. Gen. Reid was also to participate, along with Gen. Sullivan, in the expedition against the Six Indian Nations to avenge the massacres of Wyoming and Cherry Valley, N.Y.

After the war Gen. Reid was appointed Justice of the Peace

of Rockingham County. He also served as County Sheriff. Gen. Reid died in September 1815 at the age of 82.

We are told that the General's wife Mary (Molly) Woodburn Reid was a woman of strong and vigorous intellect, even tempered and of a cheerful disposition, who exerted a powerful influence over the strong and more excitable passions of her husband. We are told Gen. Stark once said of her, if there is a woman in New Hampshire fit to be governor 'tis Molly Reid.

Her half-brother, David Woodburn was the maternal grandfather of Horace Greeley.

Mrs. Reid died in April 1823 at the age of 88 years.

The local D.A.R. Chapter is named in her honor.

COL. ROBERT MACGREGOR MEMORIAL

Sharing the same window with his father-in-law we find the name of Robert MacGregor. Robert was one of the nine children of the Rev. David MacGregor. During the Revolution Robert was on the staff of the illustrious Gen. John Stark. Robert and his wife Elizabeth, daughter of Gen. George Reid, first settled in Goffstown following their marriage.

We are told that he was an astute and energetic young businessman. He was the projector and principal proprietor of the first bridge crossing the Merrimac River in what is now Manchester. Living across the river from John Stark, we are told Stark was quite doubtful of the project and remarked to MacGregor, well Robert, you may succeed, but when the first passenger crosses over, I will be ready to die. However, the bridge was a success and was constructed in sixty-five days. Needless to say, Stark lived to cross and re-cross many times.

Robert MacGregor was also one of the original proprietors of the Amoskeag Canal, one of the earliest works of that nature in this country.

Robert was quite a young man at the beginning of the Revolution, but joined the troops mustered in N.H. in 1777 by Gen. Stark. He was aide-de-camp to Gen. Stark at the battle of Bennington and the surrender of Gen. Burgoyne.

The Robert MacGregors were the parents of nine children. Col. MacGregor died in his native town of Londonderry in 1816 at the age of sixty-seven.

THE REV. JOHN ADAMS D.D. MEMORIAL

This window is dedicated to the Rev. Adams and his wife Mary Ann MacGregor. Dr. Adams was born in Plainfield, Conn. in 1802, and was graduated from Yale in 1821. He was also a graduate of Andover Seminary in 1826 and was the pastor of the Londonderry Presbyterian (West Parish) Church for seven years, 1831 to 1838. After leaving the Londonderry parish Dr. Adams served churches in Great Falls, N.H., Brighton, Mass., and Gorham, Maine.

During the Civil War, Dr. Adams was chaplain for three years with the Fifth Maine Regiment and for one year with the 121st New York Regiment. Dr. Adams died at the age of sixty-

of Rochester, New York, in 1812. He was a member of the
Society of the Friends of the African Race, and was
active in the cause of the colored people. He was
a member of the New York State Convention for the
abolition of slavery, and was one of the signers of
the Declaration of Sentiments. He was a member of the
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COL. ROBERT HANCOCK'S MEMORIAL

Robert was born in 1791, in the town of
Hancock, New York. He was a member of the
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THE HANCOCK MEMORIAL

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of the signers of the Declaration of Sentiments.

four (1866) in North Hampton, Mass.

Dr. Adam's wife Mary Ann MacGregor was the daughter of Col. Robert MacGregor, and a great-grand daughter of Rev. James MacGregor. We are told that she and her two sisters, next mentioned in this narrative, were noble and cultural women, worthy of the honored name they bore.

COGSWELL & HALL MEMORIAL

Not too much is known of the two sisters of Mary Ann MacGregor Adams. Maria (Mary) MacGregor Cogswell and Eliza MacGregor Hall were descendants of historically famous ancestors on both sides of their family, being the grand-daughters of Gen. George Reid and the Rev. David MacGregor.

Apparently both left this area at an early age. Mrs. Cogswell died at the age of 90, on March 25th, 1880, location not given, but interred in Forest Hill Cemetery. Mrs. Hall died at Princeto, Mass., at the age of 88 on Aug. 8, 1882, her remains are also interred in the same cemetery.

THOM MEMORIAL

This window dedicated to James and Harriet C. Thom by their son Gen. George Thom, represents but another of the famous names of this community. While not much information is available about that particular generation of the family, it is apparent that much of their life was spent in other areas of the country. The Thom's were living in Minnesota when George was born in 1819, but apparently returned here sometime later as Gen. George Thom was a student at Pinkerton Academy in 1827.

The Thom family was descended from Dr. Issac Thom, an early physician of the settlement and proprietor of the Thom-Willey Tavern, as well as the town's first postmaster. James C. Thom died Nov. 27, 1852 aged 67 years and his wife Harriet died June 19, 1873, aged 84 years. Both are buried in East Derry.

While the memorial windows are dedicated to his parents, it is only fitting we should devote recognition to Gen. George Thom, the donor. He was probably one of the highest ranking military men from this area to serve during the Civil War.

Gen. Thom was married to Mary Lucia Griffin, born in Abbeville, S.C. Information of any children is not known. Gen. Thom died at Washington, D.C. June 29, 1891 and his wife died at Portland, Maine, Jan. 15, 1881. Both are interred at East Derry.

DEACON HENRY TAYLOR MEMORIAL

Called "Uncle Henry" by all who knew him, Henry Taylor was, we are told, a John-like man. Unmarried, and having no family of his own to care for, this kind man took everyone to his capacious heart. He was the grandson of Matthew and Janet Taylor, who had come to Londonderry in 1722. Of interest is the fact their first son John was born during their passage to America. Deacon Henry's father, Samuel, was the sixth son of

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Section 1 - Introduction

First paragraph of the main body text, starting with 'The first...'.

Section 2 - Details

Main body of text, consisting of several paragraphs detailing the subject matter.

Section 3 - Conclusion

Final paragraph of the document, likely summarizing the findings or conclusions.

of the family.

We read of no great exploits in the life of Henry Taylor, rather his was a life of love and kindness, staunch in his faith and love of his fellow man. Henry Taylor died April 27, 1865, and is buried in the family plot in East Derry.

The memorial window donated in his memory, was given by a nephew, James Calvin Taylor and bears the inscription, Family of James Calvin Taylor.

JENNETTE AND SARAH HUMPHREY MEMORIAL

Two sisters, both maiden ladies, sisters of the venerated and beloved Deacon John Humphrey, are those persons memorialized in this window. The two were, and I quote Dr. Wellman from his re-dedication sermon, (1884) "Like Mary and Martha of Bethany, the one silent and thoughtful, the other not less thoughtful, but more energetic and demonstrative, they were well mated, each supplying the lack of the other." They were accustomed to speak evil of no one, but abounded in kind words, and deeds. They were frugal, yet saved not for themselves but for Christ and his kingdom.

Their names were never sounded abroad in public print but their Christian benevolence has reached round the globe. Modest persons, they would have been the last to have dreamed that their names would one day be emblazoned in the midst of glorious color in the house of God. For a lifetime of kind ministrations and love to others is explained by the words of Jesus - "In as much as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

Jennette died April 17, 1874, aged 83 years, and Sarah died July 8, 1866, aged 73 years; both are interred in Forest Hill Cemetery.

The memorial was presented to the church by Mrs. James Calvin Taylor.

THE JAMES AND PERSIS TAYLOR MEMORIAL

This window dedicated to Deacon James Taylor and his wife Persis is a memorial to a couple who always placed the welfare and good name of the Church in a place of prominence in their lives.

Deacon Taylor was a man who possessed "old fashioned Scotch honesty and steadfastness." A man of sound and practical judgment he was often appointed arbiter in the settlement of disputes. Deacon Taylor was, we are told, a man beloved by his own family, a true friend, public-spirited, and greatly honored and respected in the town, a man always faithful to his trust as an office-bearer in the Church of Christ.

Mrs. Taylor, like her husband, possessed strong and sterling traits of character. A woman of tender heart and far reaching sympathies. The chief arena of her life work was her home, where she reigned supreme. Though the mother of a large family, she

was always an ardent worker for the church and a disperser of good cheer where ever she went.

Many of the noblest traits of character were reproduced in their son, Samuel Harver Taylor, L.L.D., for many years the principal of Phillips Academy, Andover, Mass. (A stone monument marks the site of Dr. Samuel Taylors birthplace at the location of the family home on Island Pond Road.)

This memorial window was the gift of Mrs. Mary E. (Taylor) Fairbanks of St. Johnsbury, Vermont.

THE CHARLES C. PARKER MEMORIAL

This window dedicated to Charles and Sarah Parker is, in the words of Dr. Wellman, a memorial to a couple "unsurpassed in unselfishness and kindness, in sincerity and honorableness, in unfailing geniality and good will, in Christian simplicity and trustworthiness, in genuine goodness, in all real worth of character, and in unaffected piety." These words, coming from a man who was a resident in their home, as was Dr. Wellman during the five years of his pastorate, at First Parish Church, are indeed words of one who held the Parkers in highest esteem.

We are told that Charles Parker, having been raised in a ministers home, (being the son of Edward L. Parker), could readily understand the labors and anxieties of a pastor for his people, and so was a tower of strength to the young Dr. Wellman in his first parish. Their house was a house of prayer. Christ had long made his abode there and it was a place of gentleness and love.

Dr. Samuel Taylor principal of Phillips Academy was married to a daughter of the Parkers.

Charles Parker died June 17, 1869, aged 51 years and his wife Sarah died January 5, 1880, aged 58 years.

This memorial window was donated to the Church by a son, Frank W. Parker.

The First Parish Congregational Church is indeed most fortunate to have been blessed with these beautiful windows.

Indeed the Church has been blessed not alone by the beauty of these objects of art, but even more by the labor of love for this old institution by those so honored.

(7)

THE EDWARD L. PARKER MEMORIAL TABLET

The memorial tablet hanging in a place of prominence in the front of the Church honors a man who labored long and diligently for his God and the salvation and welfare of his flock. For forty years he was the beloved pastor of this church. Of interest is the fact that Rev. Parker was absent from the pulpit only seven Sundays during the first 36 years of his ministry because of ill health.

During the last four years of his life Mr. Parker suffered from heart disease, and during this period any exertion caused him considerable pain; however, this did not prevent him from his continuing service to the Church. On the day of his death he was returning from a late afternoon service held at a school house in a distant part of the town, his third worship service for the day. His horse stumbled and fell near the farm of Mr. Clark. Hurrying to the home of Mr. Clark for assistance, apparently the exertion was too much for the good minister, for on his return he expired while bending over his horse.

Appropriately one of his parishioners remarked, "he served his Master faithfully all day and went home to rest at night." A granite monument marks the spot where the Rev. Parker died. This may be found on Rockingham Road a short distance from Webster's corner going toward town.

On the Wednesday following his death, services of a solemn and appropriate nature were held with the following men officiating: Rev. Day, Derry Village Church, Rev. Thayer, Windham, Rev. Willey, Goffstown and Rev. Brainerd, Londonderry. We are told that more than twelve hundred of his flock had gone down to the grave while the Rev. Mr. Parker had dwelt among them.

The following quote is from the Congregational Journal, Jan. 1851: "Soon after Mr. Parker graduated he became the pastor of the Presbyterian Church in Derry, then a part of Londonderry, which was in a condition far from promising and inviting; but under his wise council, his unremitting labors, his self-possessed spirit, and admitted moral worth, attained to be one of the best ordered, the most harmonious and flourishing in the state." The preceding words probably best depict the Rev. Mr. Parkers ministry at First Parish.

At the time of his death the Rev. Mr. Parker was in the process of writing and compiling the material for Parkers History of Londonderry. The work was completed by his son Edward P. Parker.

In 1811 Mr. Parker married Miss Mehitable Kimball of Hanover, N.H.. She was to him a worthy companion and a valued helper in his duties. They were the parents of four children, two sons and two daughters; the youngest daughter died at about three years.

The Rev. Mr. Parker died July 14, 1850, aged 65 years; his wife Mehitable died June 19, 1852, aged 70 years; both are interred in Forest Hill Cemetery.

THE HISTORY OF THE BAPTIST CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES

The Baptist Church in the United States is the largest of the various denominations in the country. It is a church of the people, and its members are found in every part of the land. It is a church of the future, and its growth is rapid. It is a church of the present, and its influence is felt in every age. It is a church of the past, and its history is full of interest and glory.

During the last forty years of his life, Mr. Parker was a member of the Baptist Church, and during this period he was a very active and successful minister. He was a man of great energy and ability, and he was a man of great faith and courage. He was a man of great love and kindness, and he was a man of great wisdom and understanding. He was a man of great influence and power, and he was a man of great honor and respect.

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EMERY MEMORIAL PLAQUE

On the north wall hangs a marble plaque dedicated to Caleb Emery and Marcia Choate Emery. Caleb Emery was the preceptor (Headmaster) of Pinkerton Academy from 1846 to 1848 following Abel F. Hildreth in the same position.

Of interest is the legacy left the church in 1919 by their daughter Marcia Emery, one of the donors of the plaque. Known as the Marcia Emery fund, this donation was to be used by the church for the purchase of candy and oranges for the children of the church and community.

SHEPARD MEMORIAL CHIMES AND CARILLON

The beautiful chimes and carillon which grace this old Church are a memorial to the life work of Alan B. Shepard who faithfully served this historic old institution as organist for a period of over sixty year.

Installed in December of 1973 and dedicated on October 20, 1974, these beautiful instruments are a gift of his family and a hosts of friends from across the nation. These instruments were dedicated during the final month of the ministry of the Rev. William Strait, who officiated at the service of dedication. Both the Jr. and Sr. choirs participated with the Jr. choir singing "Let There Be Peace On Earth", and the Sr. choir singing the "Hallelujah Chorus". The words of dedication were given by Donald Houston and the guest organist for the occasion was Mrs. Margaret Powers, President of the New Hampshire Organists Society. The act of presentation was made by his widow, Mrs. Alan Shepard, and receiving in the name of the church was Mr. Irving Merrill, Chairman of the Board of Trustees.

Alan Shepard was a native son of the town, born Sept. 9, 1891, the son of Frederick and Annie B. Shepard. He was a graduate of Pinkerton Academy and Dartmouth College. He was active in the local scouting program during his younger life. Mr. Shepard served in the U.S. Army during both World Wars, retiring after World War II with the rank of Lt. Col.

In addition to his position as church organist he served as treasurer and a member of the investment committee for many years. He was a man of great dignity, a man whose council was sought and heeded, a man of courage and a man of love, love of church, family and country.

Alan Shepard was married to the former Renza Emerson, also a local person. They were the parents of two children, Alan B. Jr. and a daughter Pauline. Alan Jr. was to become famous for his exploits in the nation's space program and to be promoted to the rank of Admiral.

SHEPARD MEMORIAL TREE

Located on the lawn of the church is a beautiful flowering pear tree, which is a memorial to the many years of faithful service to his church by Mr. Shepard. A gift of the congregation, this memorial tree was given during the terminal illness of Mr. Shepard, and it was felt that a living memorial was most suitable to commemorate the more than sixty years as organist of the church.

HELEN M. NOYES BUILDING

The new Christian Education building, completed in 1972, was named in honor of Mrs. Noyes for her many years of dedicated service to First Church.

Mrs. Noyes served as Church School Superintendent for a period of twenty-five years, until health reasons forced her to relinquish the position. Later after her health improved she continued to serve as a teacher for many more years. A generous benefactor in helping to finance the new building, she was to live to see the completion and first years of use by the church.

She was born in Lowell, Mass. in 1884 and moved to this area at the age of 19 years. Here she met and married J. Alan Noyes, a local man in the wood and lumber business. Mrs. Noyes was to remain active in the life of the church until a few months prior to her death in 1975 in her 91st year.

THE BAPTISMAL FONT

A gift to the church by the family of the late Hazel K. Spafford, Mrs. Spafford was active in the affairs of the church for many years, serving as president of the Se-Lo-Ki society and various other offices.

Mr. and Mrs. George Spafford were the parents of two sons and a daughter. Of interest is the fact that the daughter, Phyllis, was active in the field of foreign missions, serving as a Home Ec. teacher at Inanda Seminary, Durban, South Africa.

EDITH WOODBURY MEMORIAL GARDEN

This memorial was established in the early 1950's after the death of Mrs. Woodbury. She and her twin sister Mrs. Ethel Babson had come to East Derry and become involved in the affairs of the church about 1942. The sisters, both widowed, lived on Lane Road where the Perry's presently reside. The evergreen shrubbery and several other shrubs around the front of the church are part of this memorial.

THE MEMORIAL BOOK

A visit to the church without viewing the Book of Memorials found in the glass-topped cabinet in the rear of the sanctuary, would be incomplete. Here are listed the names of many persons

THE CHURCH

located on the corner of the church as a memorial to the memory of the late Mr. J. H. Smith, who was a member of the church for many years. The church was built in 1872, and was the first of the kind in the city. It was built by the members of the church, and was dedicated to the memory of the late Mr. J. H. Smith.

THE CHURCH

The new Church of the Holy Spirit, located in 1872, was named in honor of the Holy Spirit, and was dedicated to the memory of the late Mr. J. H. Smith. The church was built by the members of the church, and was dedicated to the memory of the late Mr. J. H. Smith. The church was built in 1872, and was the first of the kind in the city. It was built by the members of the church, and was dedicated to the memory of the late Mr. J. H. Smith.

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who have been memorialized by monetary gifts to the Church. These funds are kept in a special account and used by recommendation of the committee on memorials, for special projects, the grand piano being an example.

The church through the years has been the recipient of many bequests. The console organ in the sanctuary being financed to a large extent by a bequest in the will of the late Nathaniel G. Head. The Shepard family were also generous contributors to this project, as were others of the congregation.

While this list of memorials is far from complete, it is hoped that the reader will derive some information from its contents.

For Reference

Not to be taken

from this library

